



Association  
of Independent  
Research Institutes

March 4, 2005

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The Honorable Michael Castle  
The Honorable Diana DeGette  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Castle and DeGette:

The Association of Independent Research Institutes (AIRI) strongly supports your legislation, HR 810, The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, which would expand federal support for human stem cell research.

AIRI is a nationwide association of 89 non-profit independent research institutes conducting peer-reviewed basic and applied research in the biomedical and behavioral sciences. AIRI institutions are distinct from other organizations involved in research – such as universities, hospitals, and for-profit organizations – in their organization, mission, and size. Their flexibility provides an environment that is particularly conducive to creativity and innovation in research. Independent research institutes receive 11% of NIH extramural research grant funding.

Scientists at AIRI member institutes understand first-hand the promise held by human embryonic stem cell research. This research may make it possible for those Americans crippled by Parkinson's disease and spinal cord injuries as well as those suffering from Alzheimer's and many other debilitating diseases to significantly improve their quality of life. Promoting the exploration of reasonable possibilities for curing and preventing disease is the responsibility not only of scientists but of the leaders of the nation.

AIRI thanks you for acknowledging the promise of continued medical discovery that embryonic stem cell research can offer. Your thoughtful legislation not only allows for broader federal funding for stem cell research, but also takes the appropriate steps to ensure the development of ethical guidelines for the future derivation of embryonic stem cell lines.

AIRI appreciates your prominent leadership and your dedication to expanding stem cell research, which holds the potential for new cures and therapies for an array of life-altering diseases affecting millions of all Americans.

Sincerely,

*Randy Main*  
Randall C. Main  
President

